

Press Release

HARFORD COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Office of the County Executive



PUBLIC SAFETY

"Ensuring a Safe
Harford"

EDUCATION

"Preparing Now,
Building for the Future"

EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT

"Governing Smarter"

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

"Growing and Sustaining
Harford's Prosperity"

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

"Protecting Our
Environment"

QUALITY LIVING

"Safeguarding What is
Important to Harford
County Citizens"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 29, 2012

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Harford County Opens Cooling Centers at Public Libraries

(Bel Air, MD) - - With heat index values expected to reach nearly 105 degrees on Friday, June 29 and Saturday June 30, Harford County Public Library will help serve as cooling stations for Harford County residents in need of relief from the heat.

Each Harford County Public Library will be open to the public during their normal hours of operation from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. both Friday and Saturday. The only exception is the Darlington Library which is open from 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 29 and from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 30.

Commenting on the opening of cooling centers for the public, County Executive David R. Craig stated, "We encourage the citizens of Harford County, particularly the elderly, young children and those with respiratory health issues to seek shelter from the heat. With the support of Harford County Public Library Director Mary Hastler all libraries will be open to the public for those who need some relief from the expected high temperatures," Craig remarked.

According to the Harford County Health Department, heat illness takes many forms, including heat fatigue, heat syncope (sudden dizziness after exercising in the heat), heat cramps, heat exhaustion or the most serious, heat stroke. Heat stroke is an advanced form of heat stress that occurs when the body is overwhelmed by heat and unable to control its temperature. A person with a body temperature above 104 degrees is likely suffering from heat stroke and may have symptoms of confusion, combativeness, strong rapid pulse, lack of sweating, dry flushed skin, faintness, staggering, possible delirium or coma. Persons with any of these symptoms should receive immediate medical attention, especially older adults.

(more)

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The Health Department advises, the risk for heat illness is a combination of the outside temperature along with the general health and lifestyle of an individual. Health-related factors that may increase risk include:

- Inability to perspire, caused by medications such as diuretics, sedatives, tranquilizers and certain heart and blood pressure medications
- Taking several drugs for various conditions. It is important, however, to continue to take prescribed medication and discuss possible problems with a physician
- A person who is substantially overweight or underweight
- Drinking alcoholic beverages
- Being dehydrated
- Age-related changes to the skin such as poor blood circulation and inefficient sweat glands
- Heart, lung and kidney diseases, as well as any illness that causes general weakness or fever
- High blood pressure or other conditions that require changes in diet. For example, people on salt-restricted diets may be at an increased risk. However, salt pills should not be used without first consulting a doctor.

The Harford County Health Department adds that individuals at special risk should stay indoors on particularly hot and humid days, especially when there is an air pollution alert in effect. People without fans or air conditions should go to places such as shopping malls, movie theaters or designated cooling centers.

For additional information visit the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Extreme Heat website at <http://dhmh.maryland.gov/extremeheat/SitePages/Home.aspx>. Or the Harford County Division of Emergency Operations at www.harfordpublicsafety.org.